



DATE: 24 September 2025
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**ORDER PAPER, QUESTIONS AND POSITION STATEMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY PACK**

- Order Paper and Questions (Pages 3 – 25)
6. To receive position statements under Standing Order 8. (Pages 17 - 26)
- (i) Position Statement from the Leader
 - (ii) Position Statement from the Lead Member for Adult Social Care
 - (iii) Position Statement from the Lead Member for Children and Family Services
 - (iv) Position Statement from the Lead Member for Environment and Flooding



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MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 2.00 P.M.

ORDER PAPER

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of having to evacuate officers will be able to advise and be on hand to assist any disabled persons.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The CHAIRMAN will make his announcements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2
MINUTES
(Pages 5 - 32)

The CHAIRMAN will move and the VICE CHAIRMAN will second:

"That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2nd July 2025, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3
MINUTES
(Pages 33 - 36)

The CHAIRMAN will move and the VICE CHAIRMAN will second:

"That the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 30th July 2025, copies of which have been circulated to members, be taken as read, confirmed and signed."

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The CHAIRMAN will invite members who wish to do so to make declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5
QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(1) (2) & (5)

(A) Question by MR BRAY

"At the meeting on 30th July 2025 the Leader moved an amendment which included a commitment to write to the Government to ask for a referendum on local government reform, which I support. Given that the amendment was not

passed by the Council, will the Leader now commit the Council to holding a referendum ourselves?"

Reply by MR D. HARRISON

"Mr Bray is aware that the Reform UK administration supports calls for a local referendum. This is why it was proposed in the amendment at the full Council meeting on 30th July 2025, which his Group failed to support. Holding a unilateral referendum by the County Council would be an uncoded burden on the tax payers of this County and would need the support of this Council to pass."

(B) Question by MRS TAYLOR

- "1. Can the Leader advise why he appointed Mr Boam as the Deputy Leader of this Council in May, and what were the changes of circumstances in the three months following that appointment which led him to sack Mr Boam as Deputy Leader and from Cabinet?
2. Can the Leader confirm that this Cabinet will remain in post for the foreseeable future to provide stability?"

Reply by MR D. HARRISON

- "1. Mr Boam was elected Deputy Leader of the Reform UK administration by its elected members in May this year and his name was therefore nominated by the Leader at the Annual Meeting of the County Council. In August of this year, it became evident that Mr Boam could not continue with his duties as Adult Social Care Lead Member. The Reform UK group decided the right course of action was to remove Mr Boam from his positions.
2. Cabinet positions are appointed by the Leader of the Council, and I have every confidence we now have the right team in place."

(C) Question by MR BRAY

"The work that the County Council has done to roll out superfast fibre broadband across parts of Leicestershire is to be commended, however residents in Curzon Close, Burbage in my Division have been battling with their leasehold company and Openreach to try and get their street connected, so far to no avail.

Would the Leader ask officers to take up the case for people in Curzon Close and surrounding streets and work with these companies to get the homes connected?"

Reply by MR FOWLER

"Superfast Leicestershire, a Government funded programme to increase digital connectivity, brought Superfast broadband to over 78,000 Leicestershire premises between 2013 and 2021. The Council is now working with Building Digital UK to

support gigabit-capable, full fibre broadband delivery to at least 17,000 homes and businesses in areas not covered by commercial broadband plans by 2032. Openreach, Virgin Media, and CityFibre have delivered gigabit capable broadband in Burbage as part of their commercial build. Unfortunately, it appears that Curzon Court has not been included.

Officers have contacted Openreach to understand why Curzon Court has been excluded. Openreach can find no record of a build request. Curzon Court is an age restricted housing complex and therefore any installation to the premises will require the full support of the leasehold company.

If further details in respect of the leasehold company can be provided to broadband@leics.gov.uk, Officers will investigate this further with Openreach."

(D) Question by MR CHARLESWORTH

"This Autumn the Government has introduced a £650 million electric car grant scheme; this will make EV ownership more affordable and accessible. However, if you live in a terraced property in Leicestershire, you will not be able to take advantage of this scheme if you need to charge your vehicle at home – as most owners do. This is because the County Councils current policy on charging forbids any cross-pavement charging methods. Many other local authorities have adopted various methods to address this issue; when is Leicestershire going to adopt a policy that meets the needs of its residents?"

Reply by MR WHITFORD

"The County Council recognises the importance of electric vehicles in supporting the delivery of an efficient transport network, enabling people to get about in their daily lives. As a result, officers are currently investigating the potential for a pilot scheme to support cross-pavement charging methods in the County. Following the introduction of the Government's £650m electric car grant scheme, the County Council will be applying for a grant to support the introduction of the pilot scheme. Although a relatively small amount is available, this should be sufficient to investigate cross-pavement charging methods in Leicestershire. The application process closes at the end of October and dependent on the outcome, the scheme could be rolled out in 2026."

(E) Question by MR ORSON

"In June, our local NHS Trust announced the pause of birthing and postnatal services at St Mary's Birth Centre, Melton Mowbray—the only midwife-led unit in Leicestershire. For many families, this centre has been more than a place of care; it has been a sanctuary of safety, dignity, and support during life's most vulnerable moments.

This decision strikes at the heart of our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which rightly prioritises the first 1001 days of a child's life—a window where

compassionate, community-based care can shape lifelong outcomes.
Will the Leader commit to:

- Standing with campaigners who seek to restore and protect vital services at St Mary's, especially postnatal care and breastfeeding support, which are so often undervalued yet profoundly impactful
- Ensuring the petition brought to County Hall today is formally presented to our key partner on the Health and Wellbeing Board, University Hospitals of Leicester, at its next meeting?

This is not just about buildings or budgets—it's about babies, mothers, and the kind of care we choose to champion."

Reply by MR SQUIRES

"Pausing births and inpatient care at the Centre from 7 July was a difficult but necessary step, given the safety risks to mums and babies caused by staffing issues. I know senior staff at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board are working together to determine the next steps for St Mary's Birth Centre.

This includes discussing the safety risks and what can be done to mitigate them. I have been told that no decision has yet been made but it is anticipated this will happen before January 2026.

Like Mr Orson, I am concerned at the potential loss of the St Mary's Centre and would urge the NHS to consider the issues of postnatal care and breastfeeding that he has highlighted. I would welcome the presentation of the petition at the Health and Wellbeing Board."

(F) Question by MR WALKER

"A number of residents are facing flooding on Sapcote Road, Burbage, particularly nos. 141 to 149. This is caused by water run-off from a neighbouring field. Would the Leader please look at this situation and update myself and the residents on the proposed remedial action."

Reply by MR TILBURY

"The County Council is aware of the flooding issues at 141 – 149 Sapcote Road, Burbage. National flood risk mapping shows parts of the area to be at high risk from surface water flooding. This is most likely to occur following periods of seasonally wet weather when the ground becomes saturated, or when intense rainfall occurs following periods of dry weather.

In its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council investigated flooding which occurred at this location in autumn 2019. The Council also investigated public highway drainage assets in its role as the Local Highway Authority, and worked in partnership with Severn Trent Water, who manage public sewer assets nearby.

The neighbouring field mentioned in the question is privately owned land. Measures to reduce the risk of surface water flooding from the field were considered in 2020; however, such work would be subject to landowner agreement as there is no statutory responsibility for the landowner to agree to or undertake any works. Neither are there any powers to enforce the landowner to carry out any works. To date, an agreement is yet to be reached.

At the time, the Council also encouraged property owners to be flood-ready and consider resilience measures to reduce the potential impacts of flooding. We have had limited recent correspondence from the community. Officers will therefore arrange a discussion with Mr Walker to understand further the current situation from the community perspective. We are also aware that Severn Trent Water have been contacted regarding their assets on Sapcote Road.”

(G) Question from MR BRAY

“Now that schools have returned, I'm getting comments from parents and neighbours about parking issues in the Westfield Road, Northfield Road and Coventry Road areas at school drop off and pick up times. People are concerned about inconsiderate parking and more importantly pedestrian safety.

Could the Leader please update me on what action the County Council has taken and any further measures proposed to alleviate problems in this area.”

Reply by MR WHITFORD

“These concerns were raised previously in September 2024 by Mr Bray. Officers responded by commissioning surveys to assess whether a pedestrian crossing would be required, inclusive of a school crossing patrol. Mr Bray was provided with a copy of the outcome of these assessments including the results and proposed actions in December 2024. The investigations and actions are summarised below.

Pedestrian Crossing Request

When assessing the justification for a crossing, the County Council uses an assessment involving both pedestrian and vehicle flows. This assessment results in a score, which in Leicestershire is called the Crossing Justification Value (CJV) and this will determine if there is justification for a crossing or not. The results of any surveys carried out are then placed into one of the following types of categories:

- A CJV of less than 0.4 would not justify any type of crossing;
- A CJV between 0.4 – 0.7 would justify the provision of an uncontrolled crossing point or dropped kerb;
- CJV between 0.7-0.9 would justify the provision of a zebra crossing;
- A CJV of 0.9 and above would justify the provision of a controlled puffin crossing.

Upon reviewing the assessment for this particular location, the results showed a score of 0.072. This value falls below any threshold of intervention whereby crossing facilities are justified. It is also pertinent to highlight that Westfield Junior School does benefit from the presence of an existing uncontrolled crossing point, which goes above and beyond what is justified when referring to the CJV.

The results of this survey taken last year remain relevant as we are not aware of any change in the environment or development taking place in the vicinity which would contribute towards changes in travel patterns.

School Crossing Patrol

We can confirm that the crossing point in front of Westfield Junior School was previously used for a School Crossing Patrol (SCP) until 2015 where the service was withdrawn due to not meeting the required CJV values. In line with the concerns raised along Westfield Road, officers conducted a new assessment on 3rd October 2024, at the same formal crossing point to re-evaluate eligibility.

This assessment as per the Road Safety GB SCP guidelines, includes all children walking to school and crossing the road in the vicinity of the Priority Narrowing. It includes all vehicle traffic in both directions. There are additional weightings for larger vehicles (i.e. anything that is not a car). There are additional factor multipliers for age of children, width of carriageway and proximity to junctions.

For an SCP site to be established, the assessment must meet a threshold of 4,000,000 or above. At its busiest, the Westfield Road site achieved a result of 1,664,331 meaning that an SCP would not be supported at this location.

School Keep Clear

Previously, the school keep clear marking which existed along Westfield Road was only an advisory marking as the school had not responded to previous calls for schools to work with us to change these markings to a mandatory marking which could be enforced (the marking on Ashford Road is mandatory and is included on the enforcement route).

When concerns were raised in September 2024, the Council again offered to convert this to a mandatory marking inclusive of installing a second marking on the other side of the road to create a clear parking zone which would offer unobstructed visibility for parents/guardians and children crossing the road.

Officers conducted the necessary consultation for the Traffic Regulation Orders to make the existing marking mandatory and introduce the second marking. This was implemented with all new signs and road markings introduced on 11th April 2025.

Other measures

Westfield Road also benefits from extensive traffic calming in the form of road narrowings, speed cushions, speed tables and a 20mph Advisory School Zone

with twin amber flashing lights.

These measures aim to highlight the school and reduce the speed of traffic using the road.

As with all schools in Leicestershire, the school has been offered Road Safety Education training.

The Sustainable Travel Team (Choose How You Move) have also offered support to the school in developing a travel plan. This would include the implementation of active travel initiatives aimed at reducing congestion at the school gate by encouraging more pupils and parents to walk, cycle or wheel to and from school. Although the school has not yet taken up this offer, information and resources have been provided directly to them.

Following a request from the Head Teacher, the team provided bespoke maps showing walking and cycling routes within a mile radius of the school. The Head Teacher also expressed an interest in Bikeability, which has been booked for w/c 19th January 2026.

(H) Question by MR SMITH

“At the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 8 September 2025, the Leader of the County Council stated that he will cut council tax without cutting services in the upcoming budget.

Can the Lead Member confirm whether reducing staff numbers is being considered as a means of addressing the widening deficit, and if so, what assessment has been made of the likely impact this would have on the delivery of our services, on residents’ wellbeing, and on staff morale across the authority?”

Reply by MR D. HARRISON

“Due to the significant financial challenge that the County Council faces it is important that we look at all Council activities so that the best options for change are identified.

It would be wrong to just target staff, as Mr Smith seems to be suggesting. As a council we exist to provide services to the residents of Leicestershire, so any service changes will be carefully considered so that their impact is fully understood.

Our workforce is highly valued, whether their role is directly delivering a service or part of a support function.

If any changes are made, people will want to be treated honestly and fairly. This has always been my approach. For changes under my administration, I will ensure that there is clear communication about why change is needed, meaningful consultation and implementation in a professional and supportive way.”

(I) Question by MRS BOTTOMLEY

“When can we expect to see a Local Government Reorganisation proposal from the administration? With the deadline being in two months’ time, what steps are being taken to ensure that adequate consultation can take place, and our residents are allowed to have their voices heard?”

Reply by MR D. HARRISON

“At its recent meeting the Cabinet highlighted the importance of modelling the different options for reorganisation which have so far been put forward. The outcomes are not yet known but they will be made available to all members. I’m conscious of the time that is left before a submission to Government has to be made but I want our consultation and the final proposal to be informed by evidence, particularly the impact on the County of any extension of the City boundary.

I respect the views of residents, which have been recognised in this chamber at our last meeting, but I expect the Government also to take other factors into account when they assess final proposals.”

(J) Question by MRS BOTTOMLEY

“After the reallocation of £2 million into “flooding”, when can our residents have details on what exactly that money is now going to be spent on?”

Reply by MR TILBURY

“The County Council has been working to shape proposals for how this reallocated funding is to be spent on flood mitigation initiatives including expected outcomes. The proposals will be presented to Cabinet on 28th October for approval.”

(K) Question by MRS BOTTOMLEY

“Leicestershire County Council’s section 19 report is significantly overdue compared to other local authorities, what steps are being taken to ensure that the report is published as quickly as possible, and that any future reports will not be delayed to this extent?”

Reply by MR TILBURY

“Whilst there are no statutory timescales for the publication of a formal flood investigation, the completion and publication of outstanding formal (Section 19) flood investigations is a high priority for the Council. Over the last two years Leicestershire has experienced a high number of major flood events resulting in properties being internally flooded. The flood events in January 2024 (storm Henk) and January 2025 were the worst recorded in Leicestershire’s recent history with well over 1000 properties being internally flooded across the two events. This has resulted in a high volume of formal flood investigations for the

Flood Risk Management Team.

There are various other workstreams which must continue whilst investigations are being progressed. These are detailed in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Leicestershire. The Council has also had to administer Property Flood Resilience Repair Grants with no additional resource provided from the Government, and deal with high volumes of flooding related enquiries.

Investigations also require significant amounts of consultation with other agencies. The process is detailed in the Formal Flood Investigations Policy available on the Council's website.

The Council has allocated an additional £400,000 to help with the completion of existing investigations and other resource pressures.

It is fully recognised that the publishing of Section 19 investigation reports is very important for communities; however, I would reassure people that where actions are agreed by all parties, we do not wait for the report to be published before progressing them. A list of outstanding investigations with estimated publication dates is available on the Council's website. These dates are currently the best estimates for publication. In the meantime, to provide communities with clarity on actions and their progress, multi-agency action plans are being prepared and shared with communities.

The speed of completion of future investigations will be improved by additional funding enabling greater resource to be directed to carrying out these formal investigations."

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

TO RECEIVE POSITION STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(Note: Standing Order 8 provides as follows: -

- (a) A position statement may give rise to an informal discussion by the Council.
- (b) At the conclusion of the discussion a formal motion may be moved to the effect that a particular issue relevant to the statement be referred to the Cabinet, the Commission, a Board or a Committee for consideration. This shall be moved and seconded formally and put without discussion. No other motion or amendment may be moved.
- (c) The discussion of any position statement shall not exceed 20 minutes but the Chairman may permit an extension to this period.)

LEADER

The Leader will make his statement.

LEAD MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

The Lead Member will make his statement.

LEAD MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Lead Member will make his statement.

LEAD MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FLOODING

The Lead Member will make his statement.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7
REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
 (Pages 37 - 44)

Principal Speakers:
 Chairman (Mr D Harrison)
 Conservative Spokesperson (Mrs D Taylor)
 Liberal Democrat Spokesman (Mr M Mullaney)

(A) REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

MR D HARRISON will move and MRS TAYLOR will second:

“That the proposed changes to the terms of reference of the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as set out in the Appendix to this report, and any consequential amendments to the Constitution required as a result of these changes, be approved.”

AGENDA ITEM NO.8
NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) PROTECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES FROM THE IMPACT OF RECKLESS TAX REFORM

MRS TAYLOR will move and MR POLAND will second:

“1. This Council notes:

- a) That 6,365 agriculture, forestry, and fishing businesses have closed in the past year—more than in any year since quarterly records began in 2017 (ONS).
- b) That the majority of these closures occurred in the first half of the year, following the Chancellor’s October 2024 announcement to slash inheritance tax relief for family farms.
- c) That only 3,190 new businesses were created in the sector during the same period, leaving a net loss of 3,175—evidence of the fastest contraction on record.

2. This Council believes:

- a) That the Chancellor's decision to reduce inheritance tax relief has dealt a devastating blow to generational farming families, many of whom now face impossible financial choices.
- b) That this policy was implemented without adequate consultation or impact assessment and has disproportionately harmed rural communities.
- c) That the Government must be held accountable for the consequences of its actions and take immediate steps to reverse the damage.

3. This Council resolves to:

- a) Condemn the Chancellor's decision to reduce inheritance tax relief for family farms and call for its urgent reversal;
- b) Demand that the Government introduce emergency support for rural businesses affected by the policy, including transitional relief and access to financial advice;
- c) Request a full impact assessment on rural business viability, to be shared with local authorities and farming unions;
- d) Stand in solidarity with farming families and rural workers and commit to championing their interests at every level of government."

(B) PROTECTING HOMES FROM FLOODING IN THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

MRS BOTTOMLEY will move and MRS PENDLEBURY will second:

1. This Council notes that:

- a) The Government's current Planning and Infrastructure Bill makes provision for housing development and infrastructure investment but does not go far enough in ensuring that new and existing homes are adequately protected from the increasing risk of flooding.
- b) Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of flooding events across the UK, placing thousands of households at risk of damage, disruption, and loss.
- c) Local planning authorities are currently restricted in their ability to ensure developments are flood-resilient. For example:
- d) Planning law largely limits councils to considering the management of surface water within the site boundary, with limited powers to require or

enforce measures for water once it leaves the site.

- e) Councils cannot always insist on the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) or require developers to demonstrate the long-term adequacy of drainage and outflow arrangements into wider catchments.
- f) Once a development is built, responsibility for managing downstream or cumulative flood risk typically falls to local authorities or agencies, without dedicated funding from central government.

2. This Council believes that:

- a) Flood prevention and resilience must be a central part of all planning and infrastructure decisions, not an afterthought.
- b) Developers must be held accountable not only for water management on-site, but also for the impact their developments have on neighbouring land and communities downstream.
- c) Local authorities should be empowered and properly resourced to require the highest standards of flood resilience in all new developments, and to invest in infrastructure that protects existing communities.
- d) Without stronger measures, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill risks locking in avoidable future costs, damages, and risks for residents and taxpayers.

3. This Council therefore resolves to:

- a) Write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the relevant local MPs, calling for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to be amended to:
 - i. Strengthen requirements on developers to use robust, sustainable drainage solutions that demonstrate effectiveness both on-site and downstream;
 - ii. Give councils clear powers to refuse or condition developments where surface water and flood risk management plans are inadequate beyond the site boundary;
 - iii. Provide long-term, ring-fenced funding for councils to invest in flood prevention and resilience measures, including off-site infrastructure;
- b) Work with neighbouring councils, the Local Government Association, and relevant agencies to lobby for stronger national policy on flooding and planning, taking an accumulative view of the risks.”

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COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 24th SEPTEMBER 2025

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

MTFS

The financial challenge that Local Government faces is well documented and has been on-going for several years. We all know from our own experience that if you don't deal with a problem, it gets worse. The same applies to managing a council's finances. If your expenditure is higher than your income, then inflation and service demand will grow the problem until it becomes unmanageable.

It is no surprise that the previous administration's approach of tinkering with efficiencies, cutting services when they ran out of ideas and hoping someone else will bail them out has left us with:

- A £90 million black hole in the revenue budget
- An £80 million funding shortfall in the capital programme
- And a SEND deficit that was £64 million at the start of this year and forecast to just keep growing and growing and growing

After 24-years in power and 12-years of maximum Council Tax increases it is staggering that they never realised that doing the same thing gets you the same results. You need to grasp the nettle and Reform how the Council operates.

I'm sure my colleagues on the Conservative benches will vehemently object to the suggestion that they have let residents down. But the growing list of service failures we are having to deal with tells a different story:

- The County Record Office, which is a vital store of the history and culture of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, outgrew its current home years ago. But there is no plan in place despite pressure from the National Archives.
- Beaumanor Hall has been left to drift for too long, costing taxpayers a fortune to see a nationally significant asset criminally underutilised.
- Most recently and most disappointingly the Care Quality Commission has judged that the Adult Social Care department "requires improvement" in their February 2025 assessment.

I doubt all the skeletons have finished falling out of the closet.

Maybe it is for the best that fixing all these issues and Reforming the Council has been left for my new administration. We will work through these problems and solve them in a professional way avoiding the drift and indecision that seems to have been endemic with the previous Tory administration.

Despite this myriad of issues there has been one undoubtedly positive theme that breaks through the bad news. I repeatedly hear about the Council's skilled and committed workforce that the public values, this certainly echoes my own experience.

So, a question that I will leave you with is:

“If staff are thought of so highly, why have we not seen the results our residents deserve? Could this be due to historic failings of political leadership?”

I will leave that question to the residents of Leicestershire to decide.

Notable achievements since May

It has been less than 5 months since the elections in May, but it feels a suitable time to reflect on some notable achievements in this short period.

The new flags policy has generated plenty of interest and I am pleased we implemented it so quickly. However, I feel that the reason we changed the policy is often overlooked. As a group, Reform strongly believe that the Council should have a laser focus on delivering services for residents and anything else should be questioned. Flags are a small part of this, but focus will be a theme going forward.

This is why I am pleased to report that the Employment Committee has recently approved a consultation to commence with the trade unions and staff on a new Working Arrangements Policy. This will set out how much time employees should spend working alongside colleagues in a Council office. One thing I find striking is how dynamic and productive our offices feel when teams are in and working together. I would like to see more of this as I truly believe the benefit to staff wellbeing and service delivery will be noticeable.

Council finances have been at the front of my mind since the election. I feel it is vital that we have a fresh look at all aspects of how the Council operates. As I have already said we need a different approach to balancing the budget and I believe getting some external support to help identify and deliver savings and support staff with the changes will allow us to move at greater pace and with less service disruption that would otherwise be possible.

My expectation is that if we get this right not only will savings be identified, but just as importantly, opportunities to improve service delivery will be identified. Members are aware that the procurement is underway and an update on the approach will be shared after the specialist advisors have been appointed at the end of October. I can assure the Council that proposals for change will be shared after they have been reviewed by officers and Cabinet.

As a Cabinet we recognise the need to progress financial improvements and not just wait for the efficiency review. Members are aware of the £2 million that we liberated from Net Zero to invest in flood prevention. The Lead Member will give an update on the proposals for the investment and how we will seek to minimise the risk of flooding through direct support for communities and investment in our Highways Drainage Assets.

To start the work of balancing the budget some significant savings have already been achieved or are at an advance state of being progressed:

- The Adult Social Care team are targeting £1 million of savings following a review of home care procurement.
- The Highways team expect to deliver £540,000 from energy savings on the streetlights project, although this could be significantly higher if Ed Miliband keeps increasing energy costs.
- Children & Family Services are aiming to save over £800,000 this year by not holding back recruitment of non-essential jobs, with half estimated to be permanent savings.
- It is only right that as a Cabinet we lead by example, after my mini reshuffle your new Reform Cabinet will cost residents £25 thousand less each year than our Conservative predecessors.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the construction of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road is now entering its final stages, and the last remaining roundabouts are due to be completed and opened to traffic at the end of September. This will be a big step towards completion of the scheme on the ground.

We look forward to full completion and the opening of the new road in spring 2026. Together with the Borough Council, we plan to get the community involved to help choose a new name for the road. More information on this will be available later this year.

Local Government Reorganisation

The last two Council meetings were dominated by local government reorganisation, including the special meeting called by the Conservative Group. There are, of course, other important issues such as the Council's financial position to which I've just referred, although we should not lose sight of the fact that reorganisation on the right scale can benefit our finances.

At its last meeting the Cabinet received a report, which was sent to all members, which set out the background to reorganisation, initial plans submitted by councils in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and the next steps. I hope everyone who read it found it a useful report in the context of all the emotion the subject has generated.

There is speculation following the Government's reshuffle about whether they will now give the same priority to reorganisation. Their capacity to get changes in 21 two tier areas approved before the end of this Parliament was already doubtful. Alongside, it is known that MPs of all parties oppose reorganisation as proposed in the Bill going through Parliament and are making their views known privately and publicly.

But we have no choice other than to make a final submission in November. As the Cabinet report said, recent Council decisions have been more about what a majority of members oppose than about what they support. So the Cabinet resolution on 12th September highlighted the importance of modelling all the different options which have so far been put forward.

We need a much wider evidence base than we currently have to enable an informed view of the consequences for the County of a City boundary extension. We need to

recognise that whatever opposition has been put forward and however loudly, the City Mayor will make a submission to extend the City's boundary.

The results of the modelling are due next week and I will arrange for them to be communicated to all members.

I will then discuss with the other Group Leaders the timetable for decision making before the final submission is due at the end of November.

Meeting with the Lord Lieutenant

It was a pleasure that His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Mr Mike Kapur, met with Cabinet members and the Chairman of the County Council recently to discuss his role, particularly in the community.

I said to the Lord Lieutenant I would encourage all members to support him in his role especially promoting The King's Award for Voluntary Service with the current nomination process now open. If you know a worthy volunteer organisation to nominate, please speak to the Members' Secretariat.

Meeting with Staff Network Representatives

I am pleased to report that the Deputy Leader, Mr Squires and I had a positive meeting yesterday with representatives from the staff networks. The meeting marked the beginning of an ongoing dialogue which recognises the importance of communicating to staff and hearing their voices. The staff network representatives and I both recognised that sometimes decisions will be made that may not align with their views. However, we all agree that maintaining open lines of communication will be essential to provide reassurance.

Our role as an administration is to enhance, support and encourage staff as it is through this that we will deliver the most effective and efficient services for the people of Leicestershire. We recognise that staff wellbeing, valuing staff and respect is key to productivity.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 24th SEPTEMBER 2025

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEAD MEMBER OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Care Quality Commission Assessment of Leicestershire County Council

Good Afternoon

As you may be aware, the Care Quality Commission has recently published an assessment of how the Council carries out its responsibilities under the Care Act 2015.

The Assessment took place between September 2024 and February 2025. The Care Quality Commission has rated the Council as “Requires Improvement”.

While this is a disappointing outcome, it provides us with a clear roadmap for change and an opportunity to strengthen our services for the people of Leicestershire, and to outline the strategic and operational actions we are taking to address the areas for improvement.

We acknowledge the delays in assessments; some people have waited far too long.

Feedback has shown that navigating our services - especially online - can be difficult, particularly for unpaid carers and those facing digital exclusion. We’ve seen usability issues with our safeguarding portal and concerns with data recording and reporting.

The Care Quality Commission highlighted gaps in some areas of service provision such as extra care, day services, and supported living options, and there continue to be high turnover rates and recruitment difficulties, especially in rural areas.

The report highlights the need to ensure we reach all of our communities especially those in rural areas of the County and work together with our partners to ensure people receive the support they are entitled to from health and social care services.

Members, this is a moment for reflection - but also for action. We are committed to delivering high-quality, responsive, and inclusive adult social care services. These strategic actions are not just reactive - they are proactive steps to build a stronger, more resilient system.

We have already reduced the number of people waiting for assessment by 200, and we are committed to removing the backlog of assessments for care and support.

We have recruited additional staffing to support officers to manage demand on services and will be working together to ensure we have the right capacity in the service going forward.

We are reviewing our website with input from people who draw on support, increasing the use of printed materials, for those who prefer information in that format whilst also expanding digital inclusion initiatives.

Working across the Council we are seeking to expand the development of extra care housing and supported living, and we will shortly be tendering for new home care and day services.

We will continue to work in partnership with our Health and housing partners to ensure people have timely access to NHS services and housing adaptations and will strengthen our reablement services to ensure people have the support they need on discharge from hospital.

We will enhance staff wellbeing, promoting career pathways from apprenticeships to leadership programmes.

The Care Quality Commission recognised much that was good in Leicestershire, noting that they saw committed frontline staff, using creative ideas to promote people's wellbeing, that people's experiences were largely positive, that assessments reflected people's choices, strengths and what they wanted to achieve as well as improving their independence.

And that the Council was committed to getting people the right care and support with strong foundations to build upon.

I invite you to support these initiatives and help us to move forward in the interests of the residents of Leicestershire.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 24th SEPTEMBER 2025
POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

SEND

As Members will be aware Leicestershire currently has 8164 active EHCPs which is an increase of 54% from 2020 and 158% since the introduction of the SEND reforms in 2016. Since January 2025 the Department has received 1305 requests for an EHCP Needs Assessments, a 20% increase from previous levels. This significant increase reflects the uncertainty over the upcoming Schools White Paper, that is expected to make changes to the way in which SEND provision is delivered in local areas.

Whilst we welcome the direction of travel to ensure more children can have their additional needs met in their local mainstream school and support across the system to increase inclusion in schools, the financial challenges impacting Leicestershire as a result of this increased demand are significant.

High Needs Block funding has not kept pace with the increase in requests for assessment, or the subsequent issuing of Education, Health and Care Plans to support children and young people with SEND.

A national increase in EHCPs by 125% against an increase in high needs funding of 59% is leaving Leicestershire with a projected high needs deficit of £118m by 2028/29.

Despite the pressures, I am pleased to share that as a result of hard work across the department over the last year, EHCP needs assessments are now being processed in an average of 24 weeks. A significant improvement compared to this time last year when figures were close to 60 weeks on average.

The Department is also exploring the use of technology to support improved processes and more efficient delivery in order to focus more time on supporting children and their families with SEND.

I would like to express my thanks to staff within the department for their hard work and tenacity over the last year to secure these improvements and work towards getting it right for children and young people with additional needs.

Children in Care

Over the last 5 years the Department has been working with Barnardos to open residential children's homes for our children in care. There are now 6 homes out of the 8 planned homes opened across Leicestershire. The remaining 2 homes will be open before December 2025. These homes are providing support for our most vulnerable children in care through 1 home supporting children who have been exploited, 4 homes supporting children with trauma that has led to emotional and behavioural needs, 1 parent and child assessment home and 1 high need

emergency and assessment home. The two further homes will support children with mental health needs and overnight short breaks. The opening of a 9th home is being considered, with an options appraisal in development.

Building our own homes for children in care not only means we are providing care that meets our children's needs but it is projected to save us £2million over the next four years.

Admissions & School Improvement

The application window for first time admissions into primary school and for transfer to secondary school is open. Whilst we have over 95% of primary and 92% of secondary places allocated to first preferences, parents and carers are encouraged to ensure they select up to 5 choices in order to ensure they secure a place at a school local to them.

I am also pleased to share that 93% of primary schools and over 88% of secondary schools are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted for leadership and management.

Music

In relation to Leicestershire Music, I'm delighted that engagement with primary, secondary and special schools remains above the national average at 93% accessing one or more Leicestershire Music services. Over 18,000 children and young people learnt with the service last year, with 20% of them being from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Families First Partnership Programme

This programme is the delivery mechanism for the Government's reform of children's social care services. It has a particular focus on multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and integrated delivery of targeted early help, ensuring families and their networks are at the centre of finding solutions to keep children safe at home. The programme is currently working on three pillars: Family Help, Family Networks, and Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams. Family Help builds on work already started to bring together our targeted early help services with dedicated child in need teams of social workers ensuring we have a strong response for families who need help. Family Networks is focusing on how we can draw together the wider support of extended family and friends to support sustainable change and to help children stay safe at home. The Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams are considering how best we work with our statutory partners of health, police and education to ensure timely and efficient decision making, investigations, and review of cases.

The children and Families services department has made a strong start to the programme with excellent engagement across the partnership. This includes the seconding-in of a police officer and health professional, with input from education staff, to build on existing multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children at risk of harm.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 24TH SEPTEMBER 2025**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND FLOODING****Flooding**

Since my appointment as the Environment and Flooding Lead Member in May, I have visited many communities devastated by flooding in the past two years, to listen to their stories and understand the very real impact that flooding has had on many lives. I offer my sincerest sympathies to those affected and am committed to helping communities become more resilient to flooding through my role as the Lead Member.

I have been liaising extensively with the Flood Risk Management Team, to understand and support the significant amount of work undertaken by them, and with other Risk Management Authorities, such as the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, district councils and the Canal and Rivers Trust. I would like to offer them my thanks for the work they have undertaken during what has been an extremely busy time over the last two years, in particular with two of the worst flood events in Leicestershire's history in January 2024 (Henk) and January 2025.

As is becoming very clear to me, flooding and flood management is a complex area not least in understanding the causes of flooding which are often a combination of factors, but also the various roles and responsibilities involved in addressing flood issues. Just as important though is getting over the message we all have to do what we can to become more resilient to flooding at the individual, community and county level. With this in mind, we will be holding more community drop-in sessions this autumn and I hope we can help as many people as possible be flood-ready ahead of this winter.

I am pleased that we have been able to make a further £2 million available for investment into community flood resilience and highway drainage improvement work. I am also pleased to say that proposals for the use of this funding will be brought to the Cabinet in October for approval so the Department can get to work on initiatives to assist communities to be flood-ready and improve their local flood resilience.

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